

## Open Letter to W. J. Bryan

Hon. W. J. Bryan, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Dear Sir: The Commoner subscription cards that I received some time ago I return. When I sent for the cards those of the democratic party who believed in democracy were engaged in a struggle with the reorganizing Wall street dictatorship for the control of the party organization. Mr. Bryan was yet the peerless and unspotted democratic leader. He was fighting a battle in defense of the party and democracy; such, perhaps, as no other man could fight. Democrats naturally desired to win and felt it their duty to do something, if possible, to strengthen his position and aid him. But with what they did; with all that he could do; the struggle that began in the party in 1896 was ended in the convention at St. Louis in 1904, so far as any party organized as the democratic party is organized, can ever be a factor in it.

The ultimate purpose of the democrats throughout this struggle was to get control of the government; to abolish special privilege, and to establish a "government of the people, for the people, and by the people." No party composed of people of opposing aims and interests can accomplish this. If the democrats control the party part of the time and the Wall street political pirates control it the rest of the time, it can never be a party with a fixed purpose. And if the democrats could not control the party this year they cannot be sure of doing so any other year. And why should democrats continue a struggle in a party that has an organization that makes success impossible? Why should a struggle for the great purpose I have mentioned be reduced to a struggle for the control of a political party? Why should they not heed a lesson that is already well learned? Why should they waste their time in years of hopeless effort, while to the dark pages of our nation's history are being added pages yet darker? The welfare of humanity—of people living and generations yet unborn—needs their best efforts, and needs them now. Why should they not continue the struggle from the only vantage ground upon which they can present a united front—the democratic Socialist party, which has already taken up this struggle, and is fighting the common foe? It cannot be said that their chances of success are not as good in the Socialist party as in the democratic party. The Socialists have a common aim—the establishment of a democratic government. They have a literature of their own that is rapidly battering down the wall of prejudice against Socialism that a subsidized corporation press has spent so many years in building upon the sands. They have a party organization which they hold in their own hands, in which there is no place for the boss or grafter; where the traitor can betray himself alone; and the wealth of the money power is impotent.

But Mr. Bryan says he does not believe in Socialism. The only objection he has expressed is based on what he conceives that the effect of Socialist success would have upon the home. The only fixed purpose the Socialists have in regard to the home is to tear the hand of despotism and tyranny from the door; to raise the veil of growing darkness that enshrouds the homes of millions. They shall roll the stone of oppression away from the sepulchre and the human race will arise to life and glory.

But Mr. Bryan has not presented an argument against Socialism, and it is inconceivable that a man who professes to believe in democracy can have one. Under democracy the people will work out their own destiny, whether it is established by the democratic party or the Socialist party.

Why cannot Mr. Bryan work for democracy in the Socialist party, which is democratic, to better advantage than in the democratic party, which is not?

From 1896 to 1904 Mr. Bryan led a party that had a fighting chance for success. It is now an unknown quantity. Mr. Bryan can never again rally more than a hopeless minority under the standard of the democratic party. I know that many of Mr. Bryan's followers, who were readers of the Commoner, too, joined the Socialist party prior to the St. Louis convention. With this fact in view, what can be expected of the rest of them now? Nor can Mr. Bryan recruit sufficient strength from the ranks of the republicans, for while he is getting the attention of one republican, the Socialists will convert many.

In a speech delivered a short time previous to the St. Louis convention, Mr. Bryan said that political parties should have an ideal, and that it should be taken so high as to be impossible ever to overtake it. The highest principle the democratic party has ever striven for is democracy. Should the principle of democracy be the ideal of the democratic party? And should it keep so far behind it as to be impossible ever to overtake it? If so, Mr. Bryan has pointed out the pathway. He has pointed out the possibilities that lie before the party in the fields of municipal ownership and state ownership of railroads. He has shown how far Europe is ahead of us in these matters; and Europe has not achieved democracy. Surely, if the party will take Europe for a guide and tag along behind her, it will be in no danger of overtaking its ideal; especially when it is dragging a Wall street anchor to windward. It is only fair to assume that I have interpreted Mr. Bryan's attitude toward the principle of democracy—foreshadowed by his utterance on ideals—correctly, in view of the fact that he is supporting a Wall street candidate for president, who he has given us the best of reasons to believe is "worse than the republicans." Of course, there is whitewash in the platform for the Philippine black page, but it is not on the statute books. If the republicans will not enforce the Sherman anti-trust law, which is on the books, of what value is a plank in a platform that depends on a man who is "worse than the republicans?" Has Wall street endorsed the Philippine plank? From supporting a Wall street candidate to being a Wall street candidate is not a long step, and not many people are as well fitted, in point of ability, to take it as Mr. Bryan. Of course, Wall street may desire a candidate who is even worse than Parker in 1908; but when Mr. Bryan gets through pointing out Mr. Parker's good qualities this may not seem so humiliating as it would have seemed in the beginning.

Farewell, Mr. Bryan, farewell! In whom I had placed all the confidence it is possible for one man to place in another; who, during the years of your leadership I had regarded as our bright star of hope, farewell! I am glad I have known you. You have taught me the lesson so hard to learn; the lesson that can never be forgotten: that if the American people wish to be the masters of their own destiny, they must depend upon themselves alone. They must stand shoulder to shoulder with their brothers in the class struggle that is being waged so relentlessly, and their watchword must be: No compromise. Once again, Mr. Bryan, farewell!

Canyon Ferry, Mont.

THOMAS GRIFFITH.



The Old Wall Is Crumbling, And the Workers Will Soon See Through the Game

The labor leader who is investigating the old parties to see who is a "good" man toward organized labor ought to be tried by a lunacy commission as to his right to run at large.

The old partyites cannot understand why it is that Debs can attract larger crowds when charging a small admission fee than the old political wallflowers can by spellbinding their threadbare and moss-covered platitudes gratis.

Some of the conscientious union men are pretty sick of the work of that labor convention held in Helena, and which endorsed the whole democratic ticket. However, it is one place and question where the union men and Citizens' Alliance advocates have come together.

The Great Falls Tribune, one of "Boddler" Clark's papers, has been sold to W. G. Conrad, and W. G. Eggleston, the noted corporation editorial hirling, has become editor of the paper. Mr. Eggleston was a wage slave on the editorial staff of the Independent when Millionaire Clark bought his seat in the United States senate. He wore the point off of many pencils sounding the praises of his moneyed master, and writing columns of matter in urging their betrayal to the golden calf. Now that W. G. Conrad has an eye on the senate, he has commenced to buy up newspapers and hire intellectual wage slaves, who are always in the market for sale to deceive and betray their own class into a slave condition for a pittance of gold.

In the last issue of the Weekly People there appears an article stating that a debate took place in Minneapolis between Thomas A. Hickey, representing the Socialist party and Comrade William W. Cox, vice presidential candidate on the Socialist Labor party ticket. If the statement of the People is true we must admit that Comrade Hickey, as a Socialist, made two very glaring mistakes in endeavoring to support the bourgeois Wisconsin state Socialist platform, and in terming Comrade E. B. Ford, editor of the Referendum as insane, on account of his taking exceptions to the aforesaid platform. This sort of child's play is not very becoming of a Socialist in debate; it is befitting in old party tactics.

"Oh! Say, did you see" (not the star spangled banner), but the Typographical union men waltzing up the street on Tuesday night in the republican parade to hear the Illinois spellbinder eulogize Teddy the Terror, the man who ignored the Typographical union men's demands in the Miller case and irrevocably stands for the open shop. Some of them had on a Toole badge. They honor Toole and Mason because they both stand for a system that allows Mr. Toole to revel in a thirty thousand dollar residence, while six of their brother union men were put on the road last week to look for a new master and beg the privilege to run a linotype for bread, which is in the hands of the capitalist class. "Oh, unionism, thou art consistent."

The daily press gives out that Comrade Hanford, candidate for vice president on the Socialist ticket, and Comrade Corregan, candidate for president on the Socialist Labor party ticket, will speak in Butte on the same date, and that the Socialist Labor party of Butte have challenged our vice presidential candidate to joint debate; the question being: "Resolved, That the Socialist party is not the party of the working class." We do not know of any one more competent to meet Comrade Corregan than Comrade Hanford, inasmuch as he is an eastern man, and has been a staunch union man for years, in the

territory where the Socialist Labor party is strongest and where the difficulty between the two factions arose. The question will probably depend upon whether the comrades in Butte will conclude that corresponding benefit will accrue by taking up Comrade Hanford's time, which is limited, in discussing party tactics, which would be of little interest to the general public. However, it should not be the policy of Socialists to refrain from debate in any circumstance, if it can possibly be avoided, and they should always be willing to meet an opponent in debate upon the questions confronting the working class. If Comrade Hanford's time is limited it might be well to arrange some specified time to meet Comrade Corregan in debate.

In last week's issue of the Socialist Democratic Herald, the editor takes some of the Socialist journals to task in the matter of their bad orthography. The comrade advises that the name Karl Marx begins with a "K" and not a "C", and that Lassalle is not spelled "LaSalle." The Montana News pleads "not guilty." However, we appreciate the suggestion and think it timely on the whole. In the meanwhile we improve the opportunity of reciprocating in a comrade-like manner by suggesting that Comrade Heath apply his didactic abilities more toward educating the comrades in Wisconsin in orthodox Socialism and thereby avoid a repetition of their bourgeois state platform, and pay less attention to bad spelling.

We are making preparations to give William Jennings Bryan, the world-famed political acrobat, the reception of his life when he enters Montana. Bewailing the large showing that Comrades Spargo and Hazlett made in Billings recently, the Billings Times, a slush democratic paper, says: "The national convention of the Socialist party would do well to call off Comrade Spargo, as he is too much anti-democratic." Of course, this will be attended to at once. Doleing along a little further, the rag advises the Socialists "just to wait until Mr. Bryan comes to Montana and he will tell them something they never heard in their lives." Of course. When the Montana News gets out a special edition of 50,000 and distributes Comrade Stitt Wilson's "Open Letter to William Jennings Bryan" into the hands of every man who listens to Bryan's effort to besmirch his conscience, the Times will think quite the reverse. By the way, we recommend the letter to the erudite editor.

The article written in last week's issue producing an alleged letter written by President Roosevelt in answer to an imaginary letter written by President Donnelly invoking Roosevelt's intervention in the meat strike, appears to have had no bona fide source. The letter seems to have been the inspiration of a capitalistic lackey employed on the New York Post, who scribbled off a lot of slush, or in other words a letter that Roosevelt ought to write in connection with the controversy, which was in keeping with this anti-labor organ's views. In its rounds it was copied by the press and was either intentionally or otherwise transformed into political medicine. It is likely that when the labor press construed it as authentic, it had in mind President Roosevelt's disposition in the Typographical Union-Miller case, or in his sending of troops into Arizona at the behest of capitalists, and again his "rapid action" work in sending arms into the state of Colorado by virtue of the Dick military law in the late controversy between the union miners and the citizens' alliance anarchists. However, it is gratifying to note that the letter originated in the Roosevelt camp.

Machinery should be the only slave of man.—E. V. Debs.